

Today I voted for final passage of the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. By reversing a Supreme Court decision that has kept women from pursuing pay discrimination claims, this bill will begin to close the pay gap for American women. It will likely be the first major piece of legislation President Barack Obama signs into law.

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act would clarify that each discriminatory paycheck or compensation constitutes a violation of the Civil Rights Act. As long as workers file their charges within 180 days of a discriminatory paycheck, their charges would be considered timely, which was the law prior to the Supreme Court's May 2007 decision.

In that 2007 decision the Supreme Court made it virtually impossible for victims of pay discrimination to go to court to vindicate their rights. Pay disparities cause American families a loss of anywhere from \$400,000 to \$2 million in pay over a lifetime. Today's approval of the Ledbetter Fair Pay Act will help to increase the financial security of America's families at a time when they need it most by helping to close the pay gap for American women.

According to the Oregon Center for Public Policy, women comprised 46% of Oregon's workforce in 2007. Today, the average full-time working woman earns only 78 cents for every \$1 a man makes. According to the Center for American Progress, an Oregon woman with a Bachelor's Degree or higher will earn \$507,000 less over a 40 year period than a man with the same level of education.

Women have made enormous advances toward economic equality since the passage of the Equal Pay Act 46 years ago. I am proud to send this meaningful piece of legislation to President Obama's desk to be signed in to law so that as a nation we may come closer to realizing the goal of equal pay for equal work for all Americans.